

BILLY WHISKERS

By FRANCES MONTGOMERY

Billy and his friends were planning to escape from the motion picture studio and had persuaded Toodles, the Shetland pony, to go with them.

The moon had just cast a bright pathway across the stable yard of the studios as it came up from behind some tall buildings when Billy awoke and touched Toodles, who was sleeping beside him, and told her that it was time to start.

"Shh! Don't speak! Be very quiet and follow me. Stubby and Button are outside, but keeping in the shadows, watching for you know we must dodge him. The minute he has gone his rounds and is out of sight Stubby is going to bark as if he were barking at the moon, as a signal for us to start. We are to hurry across the yard and escape through the gate. It is locked now, but I shall butt it down. The minute it falls we will all jump through the opening and run for dear life before the night watchman and the policeman on the beat have time to get here and see what caused the noise."

"Oh, Billy, I am so frightened!" said Toodles. "Never fear, Toodles dear! I'll look after you. And you are going to have more fun than you ever did in your whole life. Hark! I thought I heard a dog howl! Yes, that is Stubby giving us the signal."

A Surprise

They were stealthily creeping out of the stable door when a voice in the stillness called out: "Who goes there?"

For a second their hearts stood still with fear, for both of them thought they were caught. But, looking up over the door, they discovered Billy's hated enemy, the green parrot, who had called out that teasing "Who goes there?" with the idea of making a noise and having him discovered so he could not depart.

"Shut up, or I'll butt your case over yonder moon!" threatened Billy; and the parrot, having had an exhibition of Billy's butting powers, did not doubt for a minute but that he could do it if he tried, so he said no more but quietly watched down on the perch and watched the four of them sneak across, the stable yard and disappear in the shadows.

But what was that terrific noise? It sounded like a building falling. There followed two shots and the running of many feet. Billy sat on her perch and bet with herself that Billy had butted down a wall or part of the stable.

Sees Trouble Ahead

"I believe Billy is running away and has coaxed that nice, quiet, well-behaved little pony to go with him, along with his tramp friends, that common-looking dog and big black cat. She will rue the day she left a good home to run away with a billy-goat! No good ever came to any animal that ran away from its home and master, especially if it went with an animal not its own kind. A horse might run away with a horse, or a cow with a cow; I could understand that. But for a pony to run away with a goat is more than I can understand. My, but there will be a commotion here in the morning when it is discovered they are missing, and I can screech my head off telling them where they have gone, but no one will pay the slightest attention to me!"

Polly was right. In the morning there was a great commotion, but no one paid any attention to her squeals and squawks.

Zigzag

The four runaways ran as fast as they could, turning this way and that in a zigzag fashion to throw whoever might be following them off their trail. Stubby and Button went ahead, as they were the fastest runners, to look out for policemen or anyone who might know them and drive them back to the studio. But the traveling seemed very slow to Billy, Stubby and Button, as Toodles took such little steps with her short legs that she got over very little ground. Then, too, her legs trembled so with fright that she could scarcely stand up, much less run.

"Oh, brace up, Toodles! You will feel all right soon, and the stiffness will get out of your legs and you will be able to keep up with us cheer up and protect you should any dog jump out at you unawares."

At the very mention of a dog jumping out at her, Toodles shivered and cried harder than ever "I want to go back!"

"Very well, then. I will take you back," said Billy. "But you better think twice, for this may be the only chance you will ever have in your whole life to be free."

"I don't care," she declared. "I don't want to be free. I want to be taken care of."

"Look here, Stubby and Button," said Billy. "You fellows wait around here and I will take Toodles back to the studio gate. Then I will return and we can continue our journey."

He had scarcely uttered these words when a police patrol wagon rounded the corner at full speed and was upon them before they could wink. Out leaped four policemen, who grabbed Toodles and Billy and shoved them into the wagon before they could count three, and off they drove, leaving Stubby and Button dumb with surprise.

Lock Billy Up

"Let's follow them and see where they are going to take them," suggested Stubby at last. "I know where they are going. Back to the studio, for I saw the animal trainer on the front seat beside the driver," said Button. "I would just like to know who gave the alarm. It must have been that screeching pol-parrot or perhaps it was the noise the gate made when it was butted down."

"My, that Toodles is a scary-cat," said Button. "And I am glad they caught her and took her back, for we would have had an awful time with her. As for Billy, he will soon get away from them."

When Billy and Toodles were bundled into the wagon Toodles' trainer turned to her and said: "Toodles, what ever made you try to run away from me after being with me for twenty-five years? Haven't I always treated you well and looked out for your comfort in every way? I bet it was that foxy old billy-goat that coaxed you to do it!"

When they got back to the studio Billy was locked in a box stall that had too high a wall for him to be able to jump over it.

Being rather tired, Billy lay down and soon was fast asleep. In the morning, just as he awoke and was wondering how he could get out, two men entered to look for a sheep that one of them had left in the stable. They opened the door of Billy's stall by mistake, when Billy, seeing a chance to escape, jumped up and with a bound went straight between the legs of the taller, thinner man and disappeared down the long aisle of the stable.

Jumps Into Auto
"Now is the time for me to get away and find Stubby and Button," thought Billy to himself as he ran out of the livery stable. But just as he was about to run out of the doors into the street, they were closed, and Billy quickly jumped into an open stall beside him to hide, for he did not wish the man who had shut him up the night before to know he had escaped from his box stall.

The front doors opened and shut and people drove in and out with wagons and autos, but not once did Billy have a chance to slip out. He was growing very much discouraged when an auto stopped before the stall he was in and a man stepped out to get a blanket he had forgotten.

"Now is my chance," thought Billy. "I'll jump in and take my chances of his seeing me." [Billy has many adventures before he finally meets his friends again.]

Soviet Faces Great Crisis, Avers Writer

Decline in Foreign Trade Presents Serious Situation

By JACKSON V. JACOBS Foreign Correspondent of Central Press

LONDON.—Out of the maze of falsehoods and half-truths about the Russian situation with which the world—and the United States in particular—has been flooded, emerges unmistakable evidence that the soviet government is facing its greatest and most ominous crisis.

Crisis are nothing new in Russia. But where heretofore the crises have been mainly of political or military character, caused by revolts of soviet opponents and by attempts at intervention by foreign nations, the present crisis is purely economic and therefore much more difficult to cope with.

Politically, it must be admitted, the soviet government has never been stronger than at present. Counter-revolutionary armies have been beaten over and over. Foreign nations which, under one pretext or another, attempted to invade Russia, fared no better than the counter-revolutionists.

Cause of the Trouble

Official soviet reports, as well as communications from foreign correspondents in Moscow, indicate a gradual improvement in Russia's productivity, accompanied by a notable increase in domestic and foreign trade. But opponents of the soviet regime call attention to the prevailing condition of economic disorganization and to a general state of affairs which, if continued, may result in the greatest catastrophe Russia has yet witnessed.

As a result of six years of soviet policy in Russia, the balance between the city and the village, between agriculture and industries, has been seriously disturbed. Upshot of this situation is that the manufactured goods produced by the cities are beyond the reach of the peasants who need them. On the other hand, the failure of the peasants to buy the city's goods without money to buy the farmers' products. Thus a vicious circle has been built up.

Foreign Trade Affords No Relief
And foreign trade does not afford relief. Last year Russia exported some grain. The soviet republic thus entered into competition with the rest of the world. The price of the Russian grain was therefore determined not by conditions in Russia but by the law of supply and demand operating in the world market.

Grain has averaged 20 kopeks a bushel. But due to the clumsiness of the soviet economic machine, the cost of delivery left the peasant producer between 25 and 35 kopeks a bushel, a trifle over the cost of production.

In this respect Russia is today in its tempestuous career, the soviet republic has no Lenin to battle with the problem and smooth the way. It has only Zimolinev, Kamenyev and Stalin. They are the big three of Russia today.

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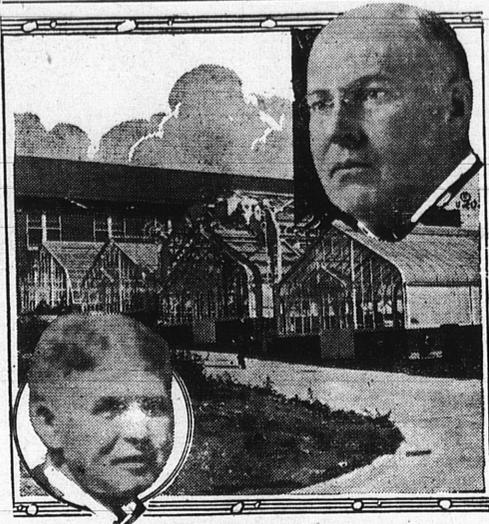
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FOOD FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Uncle Sam's Institute Is Planning For Supply of Edibles 100 Years Hence



Dr. William Crocker (left), a view of one section of the laboratory, and (right) William Boyce Thompson

By MARGERY PICKARD

NEW YORK.—Finding means to assure an adequate food supply for the United States in 2024, when, it is estimated, the country will have three or four times as many mouths to feed as now, is the assignment given to the Thompson Institute for Plant Research by its founder, William Boyce Thompson, financier and philanthropist. The institute has just begun its work.

Officers of the institute say that the rate of increase in the last four years indicates that the population of continental United States will be 123,000,000 in 1930, 167,000,000 in 1950, and 195,000,000 in 1960.

In order to be self-supporting in 1960, it is pointed out, the maximum food production of the United States thus far virtually will have to be doubled, and the demand, presumably, will continue to increase with the further increase of population.

In another century, it is estimated, this country must feed, clothe and shelter 200,000,000 to 300,000,000 people, instead of 100,000,000 as now.

Will Be Permanent Foundation
Through personal association with Dr. Robert Kennedy Duncan, organizer and first director of the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, Mr. Thompson became convinced that the most scientific research can do in solving practical problems.

As a result he founded and endowed this laboratory for scientific research into plant life. It is not connected with any college or other institution. He is its only financial backer. It will have an endowment of about \$5,000,000. Steps are under way to make it a foundation, on the lines of the Rockefeller or Carnegie Foundations, so that its work may go on indefinitely.

Mr. Thompson is working for the future, explains the director of the institute, Dr. William Crocker, formerly professor of plant psychology in the University of Chicago. "It took fifteen years for Dr. William Saunders and his sons to develop the famous Marquis wheat, and twenty years before it could be raised in any quantity; but now it has increased the wheat yield between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 bushels a year, on the average."

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NOT WICKED

Two Highland farmers met on their way to church, and one said: "Mon, I was wonderin' what ye will be askin' for yeon bit sheep over at your steadin'?"
"Mon," replied the other, "I was thinkin' I wad be wantin' 50 shillings for that sheep."
"It will take it at that," said the first; "but, ah, mon, I am awfu' surprised at you doin' business on the Sawbath."
"Business!" exclaimed the other. "Mon, sellin' a sheep like that for 50 shillins is no business at all; it's just charity."

CORRECT

It happened in a medical school. "Now," the lecturer said, "suppose you had been called to see a patient with hysterics—someone, for instance, who had begun to laugh and found it impossible to stop—what is the first thing you would do?"
"Amputate his funny bone!" promptly replied the new student.

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